



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

AFGHANISTAN

Establishing Independent Media

Winter 2010



Photo: Internews

The successful growth of open media in Afghanistan provides jobs for both men and women.

MEDIA SNAPSHOT

- Support for the establishment of 41 community radio stations across the country, providing access to eight million Afghans.
- *Salaam Watandar* provides three hours of national news daily to 24 provinces in Dari and new, expanded Pashto programming.
- Trained more than 3,000 Afghans in journalism and business development.
- Established *Pajhwok*, the Afghan independent news agency.
- In cooperation with the international community, supported the development of the Government Media and Information Center.

Data as of February 2010

BACKGROUND

USAID supports media development in Afghanistan as a component of democracy and governance institutions. A strong independent media is seen as integral to the free exchange of information and ideas vital to the democratic process and development of a civil society. USAID is building the capacity of broadcast media through technical support, equipment upgrades, hands-on training in balanced and accurate reporting, and development of Afghan media policy and a regulatory framework.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

NETWORK OF RADIO STATIONS

Since most Afghans receive news and information via radio, USAID invests significant resources to strengthen the electronic media sector. USAID has:

- Established 41 community-based, FM radio stations across the country, providing independent media access to approximately eight million Afghans.
- Established *Pajhwok*, the Afghan independent news agency.
- Provided technical assistance for broadcasters and training for journalists, now through two new *Nai* training hubs in Jalalabad and Mazari Sharif.
- Facilitated policy dialogue about media law reform between the media, government, parliament, and NGOs with positive legislative reform outcomes.

RADIO PROGRAMMING AND DISTRIBUTION

USAID supports the production of daily radio programming that is broadcast via satellite nationwide. USAID has also:

- Supported the nationally acclaimed *Salaam Watandar* radio broadcasting service, which provides three hours of news and information in Dari and Pashtu. This program is distributed to 24 provinces daily, providing more than eight million Afghans with access to current affairs, educational, and cultural radio programming via FM radio.
- Established the *Tanin* nationwide distribution network, providing radio content to subscribers nationwide.
- Funded the production of numerous public interest radio programs regularly broadcast, including award-winning children's programming as well as programs highlighting civic education, women's issues, and human rights.
- Distributed 40,000 radios throughout the country to vulnerable populations and rural women.

CONTINUES >



USAID
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AFGHANISTAN

Establishing Independent Media (continued)



Photo: Internews

Ghor journalists enjoy their first training experience at the Nai office in Kabul.



Photo: Internews

With support from USAID, Afghan reporters are providing their communities with greater access to news and information.

- Introduced Radio over Internet Protocol (ROIP), enabling stations to share content and stream each other's broadcasts live.

TRAINING FOR MEDIA PROFESSIONALS

Established the *Nai* media training agency, where Afghan trainers provide business development and content production instruction. To develop a sustainable independent media network, USAID has:

- Opened two new regional training hubs in Mazari Sharif and Jalalabad, with two more planned for Hirat and Kandahar City.
- Trained more than 3,000 male and female media professionals.
- Updated the journalism curriculum at five universities, reaching approximately 350 students.
- Provided training for Afghan lawyers and journalists in understanding and advocating for fair media regulation, freedom of expression, and access to information.

PUBLICATIONS AND ALTERNATIVE MEDIA

USAID has supported a number of publications and alternative media programs that are educational, entertaining, and designed to raise awareness and stimulate discussion on current social and political issues. USAID has:

- Supported two national news publications: *Killid*, a weekly magazine, and *Morsal*, a women's monthly magazine.
- Provided printing support to a Kabul daily newspaper and to a university printing press.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

USAID has built the capacity of local, state, and independent broadcast media and, working with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, has developed an Afghan media policy and a regulatory framework. These efforts have strengthened Afghan media and the government's ability to promote dialogue on key political events.

Activities have included:

- Establishment of an independent news agency that provides accurate information to local, regional and international media outlets.
- Technical support in the development of Afghanistan's Media Broadcast Law and the Election Media Code of Conduct.
- With the international community, supporting the development of the Government Media and Information Center.

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On behalf of the American people, the U.S. government has provided humanitarian assistance and economic development to those in need around the world since the Marshall Plan.